

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
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1. The Soviet political system is one in which all power is ultimately concentrated in the hands of a few people. The backbone of the entire system is the Communist Party, but during the Stalin regime all Party power was concentrated in the hands of one man -- Stalin. After he came to power, Stalin's task was to destroy all opposition groups within the Party that were waging an open or secret struggle against him, and to get rid of individuals (frequently even those loyal to him, and not necessarily having anything in common with his opponents) who might, in some measure, threaten his dictatorship. Stalin was successful in this. The notorious purges of 1937 were a result of this struggle. Purges included Party members who did not rigidly adhere to the Party line, but were inclined to think for themselves. The struggle of Stalin was one for "complete unity".
2. Despite the blind loyalty and the submissiveness of the majority of the members of the CPSU, the struggle for this so-called unity (in other words, the dictatorship of a single individual) continues even under the present regime. It is bound to continue with the same intensity and in the same cruel form as Stalin's as long as the Soviet political system exists.
3. The aim of Stalin had been to create a political party of unquestioning members because he knew that, with such a following and with the essential forcefulness of a party machine reaching into all fields of life, at all levels, he could achieve all his aims -- political or otherwise. Thus, the Communist Party was transformed over the years in accordance with well calculated plans and policies, eliminating within the Party ranks all the independent thinkers. Stalin and his immediate retinue effectively strangled all initiative elsewhere in the Party; this was covered by shameless, demagogical mouthings about the "democratic foundations" of the Party, the necessity of criticism and self-criticism, without which the Communist Party is professedly headed for destruction.

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4. Stalin, thereby, made the majority of the Party membership his lackeys and slaves to his wishes. The slightest indication of disagreement with him personally or with his policies resulted in severe punishment. Using any available means, Stalin strove to achieve unquestioned authority. He re-modeled the history of the 1917 Revolution to show that Lenin (by then dead and unable to contradict Stalin's perversions of the truth) and Stalin himself were responsible for the Revolution. All Party members were forced to accept this version of history.
5. The average Communist Party member now is very devoted to the cause and believes what is said by his leaders. There should be no doubt about this. Fanatics eventually developed among the Communist Party membership, and these in turn became very useful and effective when manipulated by the Party leader. The welfare of the Party lords, and indeed the entire Soviet Government, rests in the hands of this category of Communists.
6. It would, however, be a mistake to believe in the existence of the monolithic unity which is trumpeted unceasingly through Party propaganda as pervading the entire Party fabric. Aside from the fanatics mentioned above, there exists in the Communist Party a significant number of members who exploit their Party membership solely to satisfy their own material needs. Such people care little whether the actions of the Party, in domestic as well as in international politics, are in contradiction to their own convictions. The events which took place in the Soviet Union during World War II and in the years immediately after its conclusion are rich in examples of the presence of this type of individual in the Party ranks.
7. After Stalin's rise, the Party, practically speaking, controlled the entire life of the country. All executive branches of the Government fulfilled without objection all instructions and wishes emanating from the Party. Important positions of leadership throughout the country were filled with Party members, including posts in industry, the military, and the security services.
8. Stalin watched his assistants very carefully. He was jealous, suspicious, and afraid of rivalry. The slightest doubt of loyalty to Stalin caused the offender's removal. Voznesenskiy, Zhukov, Popov (formerly Party secretary of the Moscow district and until recently Soviet Ambassador to Poland), to a certain extent Molotov, as well as lesser persons throughout the government service, were victims of Stalin's political combinations. These machinations were always for the purpose, of course, of strengthening Stalin's position.
9. Sorely afraid to concentrate much power anywhere other than in his own hands, Stalin, therefore, calculatedly developed the idea of many small ministries and a huge number of deputy ministers, who, in actuality, were deprived of independent authority. Such a concentration of power in the same hands, together with the ceaseless reorganizations of the Government (mergers and expansions of ministries), has, to a considerable degree, hindered the economic development of the country. Under the new Malenkov Government, this autocracy continues to hinder such development. It is obvious that, even under the present regime, the system of collective leadership is not in fact what the name would suggest. It is understandable, of course, that Malenkov, because at first he lacked a solid base from which to exercise one-man rule, was, to a certain degree, obliged to utilize the formula of collective leadership. This, too, will disappear as Malenkov consolidates his authority and power within the Government.
10. Stalin liked to attract to himself young Communist Party members, such as the aforementioned Popov, and Shcherbakov, Kosygin, Zhdanov, and others, in order to create a bloc against old-timers like Molotov. Stalin was quite successful with this policy. With the liquidation in 1936-7 of the last opposition groups within the Party, Stalin's dictatorship became firmly established. Without Stalin's consent, it was virtually impossible to decide anything of importance in any field: government, armed forces, and industry. Stalin came to play with democracy as does a demagogue. But all discussions at meetings of the Central Committee, or the Politburo, or in the ministries, continued if Stalin was.

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present only until he spoke. When he spoke, it meant that the decision was made; further discussion with the view of altering the decision was useless and out of the question. Stalin's associates were known to have a desperate and overwhelming animal fear of making a mistake or saying the wrong thing.

11. As is well known, Stalin did everything possible to make himself appear to be a god. His own efforts in this respect pleased him very much. He fancied himself an expert and the final authority on all subjects in all fields. This glorification of Stalin's genius reached fantastic proportions during World War II, especially towards its end.
12. Stalin had no difficulty, needless to say, in promoting or firing anyone within a minute. He could and did fabricate "facts" and charges at the drop of a hat -- with no one to question his work -- as he did in circulating stories concerning Voznesenskiy, Popov, and Zhukov. Malenkov himself was once the victim of Stalin's anger, resulting from a scandal in the aircraft industry at the beginning of World War II; Malenkov ended in official disfavor for one or two years.
13. The arrangement in government offices of photographs of government or Party officials was accomplished in accordance with precedence directives issued on Stalin's personal orders. He is known to have taken great delight in juggling, at whim, the status of the top officials.
14. Under Malenkov's leadership, the system of full, complete control over all aspects of life in the USSR continues through the Communist Party apparatus as before, without significant changes. The new regime, with Malenkov at the helm, maintains Stalin's policies. Malenkov himself is of the new generation of the Party; at the time he took over the Government, he was neither popular nor well known. He covers or disguises his personal aims through the attribution of all plans or directives to the Party. The so-called policy of collective administration is, indeed, Malenkov's own idea. It was conceived to make up for Malenkov's lack of fame, giving him time to accumulate a "brilliant" background through the usual device of the distortion of history. Malenkov is, however, working toward this, making assiduous efforts to popularize himself, and he seems to be succeeding at this. Since Malenkov was saved from the clutches of Beriya by the Party, Malenkov is now building up Party prestige as a tool, and the only useable tool, for his own purposes. Here Stalin's policy is being repeated.
15. The hidden struggle in the top echelons of the Soviet Government goes on even during Malenkov's regime. This struggle emerged publicly for a brief period after Stalin's death when Beriya was forcing his way to the top. Now the struggle continues mainly as a joust between the old-timers and the new generation. The advantages, however, are on Malenkov's side because a sufficient number of persons support him openly and because there are few old-timers left within the ruling circle. Of the latter, Molotov is the chief representative.
16. It is interesting that within the USSR it was generally accepted that Molotov would succeed Stalin. He was well known and had long been regarded as the Number 2 man. Stalin had calculatedly undermined Molotov's authority from 1946 until 1949. Molotov's wife had been arrested in about 1948 because of some connections with Americans. This shook Molotov's position, and he disappeared from social life in the capital. Molotov's wife was later released. This was considered very secret information, and source was admonished several times by the individual relating it to him to keep his "mouth tightly shut concerning it". As Molotov's popularity waned, the relative position of Malenkov began to grow very fast. Malenkov soon replaced Molotov as the Number 2 man in the Soviet hierarchy. Malenkov's position was particularly strengthened after Zhdanov's death.
17. Molotov is now Malenkov's leading opponent. Malenkov's policy of collectivism of rule is clever, and one against which Molotov has little chance of taking action. Molotov, besides, has been and probably still is very ill, according to persons with whom source talked in 1948, and who had recently seen Molotov.

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18. The new generation in the Party includes Saburov, Malyshev, Kosygin, Pervukhin, and others whom Malenkov has drawn about him because of their known opposition to the old-timers. Khrushchev, however, is neither colorful nor clever; he was a lackey and factotum of Stalin, willing to follow his leader's orders without question. Khrushchev's present position derives only from the manipulations of Malenkov, who wants as Party secretary-general a devoted man who will obey orders without second-thinking. Khrushchev is just this sort of man.
19. Malenkov's position grows stronger by the day. All the advantages are on his side, and no one is in a position to oppose him. Since Stalin's death, the entire Party apparat has been in Malenkov's (not Molotov's) hands. Malenkov even succeeded in using members of the Central Committee to purge Beriya, who, until Stalin's death, was considered one of Stalin's closest friends. One should not, however, overestimate the struggle within the Soviet Government, or the weakness this struggle might reflect.
20. Similarly, it would be a grave political error to consider that Malenkov's ascent to power will bring with it any radical change in the internal or, especially, the foreign policies of the Soviet Union. It is realized in the USSR that certain western European political figures, particularly in Great Britain and France, continue to hope for this. Recent events, such as the Berlin Conference, have shown that the Soviet Government has not changed its foreign policy one bit from that formerly followed by Stalin. This policy remains based on the well-known maneuver of trying to split the countries of the free world one from the other, with particular emphasis on the broadening and deepening of Anglo-American differences. Source confirms this by his knowledge of directives (direktivnye ukazaniya) sent abroad by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
21. In accentuating Anglo-American conflicts of policy, the USSR is using as its principal device the matter of the re-establishment of normal trade relations with the western European states, especially with Great Britain. In this way, the Soviet Government hopes to achieve two effects:
 - a. The attainment of a political success against the USA, the chief adversary of the USSR.
 - b. The liquidation of severe economic difficulties still existing at home, particularly in agriculture, inherited from Stalin's regime.
22. In order to conceal its imperialistic aims and to rehabilitate its prestige as a peace-loving nation with an irreproachable foreign policy -- which was "completely shattered" by the Korean war and the events in East Germany in June 1953 -- the Malenkov Government has intensified considerably its so-called "peace attack", and continues to gamble or speculate openly with the notion of the possible peaceful co-existence of the capitalist and socialist systems. This theory, despite its known bankruptcy in the minds of Soviet leaders, is known still to lull to sleep certain political leaders in the western world who forget that Marxism per se proves the opposite of this theory, namely: the impossibility of the peaceful co-existence of these two systems and the inevitability of the liquidation of the capitalist system by use of all available means. This is one of the basic tasks of Communism. It is source's opinion that the USA and the other countries of the free world will commit a "fateful error" if they neglect to give proper attention to this aspect of the Marxist theory when they develop their policies vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc.
23. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) never had independent power, especially during the latter years of Stalin's regime. It was and is still merely an executive organ of the Party. The leadership of the MVD has been and remains under Party control. It is, nonetheless, a powerful weapon in the hands of the Party.

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24. On Stalin's death, Beriya had the opportunity to seize power; however, he was not clever enough to take full advantage of this opportunity. Beriya was, moreover, the only official who has ever had the opportunity to wrest the full control of the State from others' hands, but he bungled his planned revolution, which was aborted one day before it was scheduled to take place. Malenkov had to seek the aid of the military in crushing the planned revolt; military aid was easy to obtain because of the traditional hatred of the military for the MVD. Some Party elements also have a bitter hatred for the MVD. And, despite the appearance that the MVD is the armed branch of the Party, the Party administrative cadres are actually the MVD's main support. The MVD as such has no influence on the decisions of the Government or the Party. The same is absolutely true of the military and other branches of the Government.

25. After the arrest of Abakumov and the removal of Ignatyev, the popularity of the MVD within the Government dropped still further. That the general population hates the MVD is ill-concealed, and is even reflected in the public attitude towards MVD sports teams, who are invariably booed. Malenkov understands all this very well, and has made it a point to assure the people that he will protect them, according to the laws of the land. He is trying hard, thereby, to ensure that the MVD is kept in line and under full control.

26. It is known to Soviet leaders that there is popular speculation in the free world that pressure from the Soviet peoples or other reasons might cause a relaxation of the various systems of controls which exist in the USSR. Source stressed that no substantial relaxation of controls has occurred, or ever will. If so, the whole state "would blow up". Party leaders are well aware of this.

27. In this respect, the MVD is responsible for the collection of information concerning the attitudes (nastroyeniya) of the masses and on the morale of the Army and Navy. Such data are collected through the powerful counterintelligence apparatus of the MVD (the First and Third Chief Directorates, and the Chief Directorate of Counterintelligence (GUKR) and their tentacles throughout the towns and villages of the Soviet Union) by means of vast agent-informer networks which have attained monstrous proportions. It would indeed be difficult, according to source, to find a single enterprise, office, or public organization not under the continuous agent-check (agenturnaya kontrol) of the MVD.

28. Once collected, this information is considered top secret, and is given special handling. It goes to the minister or to one of the deputy ministers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who passes it to a total of only three or four men outside the Ministry, such as Malenkov and Khrushchev, who are members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, CPSU. In this way, and to a limited extent, Soviet public opinion does influence governmental planning. If, however, the information is particularly unfavorable or, in effect, bad news, the MVD personnel are reluctant to report it. This is because of their extreme hesitancy to take a step that will end in a mistake. They fear being accused of making overstatements, since they would be held responsible for any exaggerations as well as for any action taken on the basis of the information they submitted. Subversive activities, important accidents, large fires, and the like are reported through the same channels and are delivered in the form of special bulletins to three or four key men in the Presidium.

29. The biggest problem facing the regime today is that of agricultural production. The people have lost the patience they had during the war and in the years immediately following. They have had their fill of unkept promises and now want action. The Government, in turn, does not know how to handle the agricultural problem. The dissatisfaction throughout the country, particularly among the agricultural workers, is increasing rapidly. The collective farm system in the USSR -- and, as a matter of fact, in all Communist-controlled areas -- has been unsuccessful, and has not justified itself. This fact is clear, and an important source of concern to the Soviet regime.

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30. The Soviet Government has found itself, generally speaking, in a difficult economic position as a result of the sharp decrease in trade with western Europe and, in particular, with the USA. The difficulty of the economic position can also be ascribed in part to the great expenses incurred by the Soviet Union in support of the Korean War. The agricultural difficulties of the postwar period increased considerably as a result of this new burden on the USSR. The limited trade with the West resulting from western embargoes was made worse by the creation of the "people's democracies", which, integrated as they were in the overall Soviet economy, were deprived of the freedom to engage in trade with the capitalist countries. Despite the Soviet policy of exploitation of the Communist satellites, the USSR is still obliged to use carrot-and-stick inducements so that the orbit states will give their full support to the new, "democratic" order and observe Soviet hegemony. It is because of this that some drains are actually made on the economy of the Soviet Union proper. It is source's opinion that, "it follows that, if the countries of the free world are bent on weakening the military-economic potential of the Soviet bloc and consequently strengthening their own positions strategically and politically, they must support (to the extent that general economic conditions permit) the policy of isolating commercially the Soviet bloc -- especially China".

31. Related to the domestic economic problem mentioned above is the well-known lack of consumer goods. The chief cause of this shortage has been the addition, since the end of World War II, of satellite consumers on the market list of the Soviet Union. This is a matter of great concern to the topmost elements of the Soviet Government, who themselves predict that the inadequacies of the Soviet consumer industries will probably continue for a long time; although this situation is being given much government attention, it is considered one impossible to correct overnight. The consumer goods problem is not, however, as acute as the aforementioned shortage in agricultural production.

32. Economic in nature as it is, the agricultural problem -- the insufficiency of agricultural production -- in both the Soviet Union and the "people's democracies" presents a serious political problem to the Soviet Government. And it is on this latter that depends the very existence of the Communist system. The Government, realizing this, attaches great significance to the problem and its solution. Certain sensible government leaders, for example, realize that the system of farm collectivization has not worked out. At the same time, however, the kolkhoz system cannot be abandoned, for an official repudiation of the theory of the collectivization of agriculture -- something that has been applied throughout the history of the Soviet Union -- would be tantamount to a complete repudiation of Marxism.

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